8/2/75
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Abzug Unit Fails to Get Secret CIA Documents

By Stan Crock
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A Central Intelligence Agency officer yesterday failed to deliver secret documents demanded by a House Government Operations subcommittee.

The chairman of the Government Information and Individual Rights Subcommittee, Rep. Bella S. Abzug (D-N.Y.), said if attorney John Greaney does not comply with the demand by Aug. 15, she may subpoena CIA Director William E. Colby.

The subcommittee Thursday requested the delivery by 9 a.m. yesterday of documents involving former CIA agent Puttaporn Khramkhruan, 31, whose 1973 narcotics smuggling indictment was dismissed by the Justice Department after the CIA refused to give the classified documents to federal prosecutors in Chicago.

The prosecutors said they had to give the information to Khramkhruan if it could be helpful to his defense against charges of smuggling about 60 pounds of raw opium into Chicago from Thailand or the judge would have dismissed the case.

Greaney, a CIA associate general counsel who handled the negotiations with the Justice Department, told the subcommittee yesterday he did not have the documents. Lyle L. Miller, CIA deputy legislative counsel, then read a letter from Colby to Abzug, which said it was "simply impossible to review the pertinent files and delete the sensitive references to intelligence sources and methods" in so short a time.

Colby said in the letter the review of the documents "will be conducted as expeditiously as possible" and may be completed by early next week.

Abzug had asked for the documents in "complete and unaltered form." After the hearing she said she would wait until she saw the documents delivered before deciding whether to issue a subpoena.

The subcommittee is investigating the use of national security assertions for blocking criminal prosecutions. The CIA said it refused to produce the documents because they may reveal intelligence sources and operations and may embarrass the agency.

Abzug said she would cut short her vacation during the August congressional recess to receive personally the documents she requested, including reports Khramkhruan filed to his CIA superiors in Thailand, reports filed by his superiors about him, and the CIA's "damage assessment" report on the alleged smuggling case.